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MADAME CLEMENCE ROYER.

Madame Clémence Royer, an eminent scientist and philosopher, was prominently before the French public during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. She received much recognition from scientists and men of letters, but since her death she has been almost forgotten. *The Open Court* contains some of her contributions (IV, 2413; 2426) which were mainly criticisms of the editorial view, and the editor made her personal acquaintance in Paris in the summer of 1900. His reply to her criticism has been incorporated in his *Fundamental Problems* (pages 324-332). Portraits of Madame Royer, taken in 1865 and 1899, were published in *The Open Court* of September, 1900.

M. Aristides Pratelle revives her memory in the present article on "Atomistic Dynamism," under which caption Madame Royer's theory might be summarized, and we gladly offer our columns for the presentation of the philosophical system of this distinguished woman as presented by an independent and intrepid follower, who speaks in the name of an organization devoted to the propaganda of Madame Royer's synthetic philosophy.

We will say that Madame Royer's theory is remarkable mainly on account of the mathematical and scientific substructure upon which it rests, and also the detailed elaboration of her views in which one recognizes at once an author who is well posted in contemporaneous science. Although we admit that we agree with her in many respects and do not hesitate to approve of the monistic tendency of her work, we are nevertheless at variance with her propositions on several most important points.

First of all we take little interest in the oneness of the substance of the universe. We believe that the oneness of substance will ultimately be proved. We do not assume that there is a plurality of divergent ether atoms, or that there are several ultimate substances of which the world consists. We think that ultimately the substance of reality from which this marvelous cosmos has developed is throughout the same, and yet we deem it of little consequence, because our monism is not built upon the theory of oneness of substance but upon the oneness of law, the oneness of those uniformities which dominate the development of existence and produce the cosmic order in which every formation appears conditioned by cause and effect. All becoming is transformation and the laws of form are

the means by which we trace the necessity of all events under definite conditions.

In a similar way we take less interest in upholding the theory of atoms as an essential part of the monistic or scientific world-conception. The atom in our opinion is a convenient mode of representing certain proportions in the specific weights of chemical substances, and it is very probable that there are definite and discrete portions in which these small aggregates of matter are combined and interrelated with others of different kinds and qualities. We might, though not without hesitation, let the statement pass that the atom is a "living and acting individuality" if we take the word individuality in the sense of being a definite, discrete thing, but we object decidedly to the proposition "that the atom possesses already at the most inferior degree all the properties, all the virtualities of the organic being."

We have repeatedly insisted on the obvious truth that combinations produce new qualities. As in mathematics the idea of a triangle can not be deduced from the idea of the line, so the character of a steam engine can not be derived from the parts of which it consists, nor from the properties of heat. A new combination possesses new qualities and the new qualities which originate by the combination will account for qualitative differences in existence. The idea that everything must be measured quantitatively in order to admit a scientific explanation is an error. The different things in the organic world and also in the domain of psychology, the different beings possess different qualities, and these qualities are the most important part of existence. Thus there is no need of saying that all the phenomena of higher life, or organized nature, of the soul and even of social interrelations should exist in an inferior degree in the atoms of inorganic existence.

Though we do not agree with Aristides Pratelle, and with some of the most important aspects of Madame Clémence Royer's atomistic dynamism, we believe that she has not received the attention due to her, and the recognition of her philosophy has been out of proportion to that of other philosophers who were inferior to her extraordinary abilities. It is not impossible that this neglect is due to the fact that being a woman she was not deemed of sufficient importance to be taken seriously. For this reason we are glad to take this opportunity of having M. Pratelle explain the proposition of this monistic conception which seems to find a potent support in the new

theory of liquid crystals, the nature of which has been lately much discussed.

In the *Literary Guide* of September 1, there appeared an excellent biographical sketch of Clémence Royer from the pen of Mrs. Hypathia Bradlaugh Bonner. It is distinguished by brevity and completeness giving a vivid account of this remarkable woman's intellectual development, and we deem it a service to our readers to reprint it here in full. We would call attention to the strange fact that those who struggle for the liberation of the human mind are generally distinguished in their early life by a strong religious fervor which goes far to prove that the ultimate motive of liberal leaders is of a religious nature.

* * *

Clémence Auguste Royer, economist, anthropologist, mathematician, physicist, and uncompromising rationalist came of a profoundly religious and royalist family, and was born at Nantes on April 24, 1830. She was educated at the Convent of Sacré Cœur, and is said to have been destined for a religious life. In 1854 she visited England, and during her stay there she made herself acquainted with the English language and literature; two years later she left that country to go to Switzerland. By this time her eyes had become opened to the errors and evils of Catholicism; but, although she rejected the authority of the pope and ceased to believe in miracles, she was still so deeply religious that in the summer of 1856 she resolved to follow exactly what she supposed was the practice of the Christianity of the first three centuries. Following up this idea, she conceived what she herself later called "a childish dream, the fruit of my monastic education," of living an anchorite life, and in solitude awaiting prophetic inspiration.

Passing through Lyons on her way to Switzerland, she proceeded to give effect to her ideas by devoting nearly the whole of her little patrimony to succouring the distressed victims of the inundations of the Rhone. Had she not been restrained by her family, she would have given all. As it was, she arrived at Lausanne penniless; but, fortunately, she was a clever needlewoman, and obtaining a poor lodging at fifty centimes a day she supported herself for a time by her needle. Lausanne, however, was not exactly suitable for a hermitage, so she determined to go to the Tour de Gourze, a lonely spot which she remembered to have visited with her family as a child. Here, at an isolated farm inhabited by an old couple, Clémence Royer took up her abode, paying twenty francs a month

for her board and lodging. Her room was small and bare, but from the window she had a magnificent view of Lake Geneva; her meals she took with the old people, who lived with the utmost frugality.

Once settled at the farm, she began to reflect upon her position, and it was brought home to her that it was only because she was prevented from obeying the injunction to give away all she had to the poor that she was able to pay the farmer the trifling sum required for her bed and board. It appeared, therefore, that it was not possible to take Christian teachings literally in the nineteenth century. But if Christianity was impracticable, could it be divine? Putting this question to herself, she submitted the Gospel teaching to examination, and came to the conclusion that it was contrary to the economic condition of society, and, in fact, so absurd that anyone who tried to carry it out would be looked upon by Christians themselves as crazy. This was sufficient; she was cured of her desire to become an anchorite. But, having arrived at this point, she suddenly felt isolated, cut off from the rest of her world, from her family, her former teachers, and the books upon which she had been nourished. One thing remained to inspire her then and throughout her life—her faith in truth, and in the possibility of discovering it. It was to this task she resolved to devote herself.

She made arrangement for a service of books from the library at Lausanne for the small sum of twenty-four francs a year, and her work of education began first by dismissing from her mind all that she had already learned, and then by studying as far as possible in the originals the latest works she could procure in science, history, and philosophy. In this way she passed the winter of 1856, entirely alone save for the two old people of the farm and for the infrequent occasions when she went into Lausanne to consult the library catalogues. It was a walk of about seven miles, and she went in in the morning, returning unafraid, by steep and lonely paths, in the darkness of the winter's night. After twenty-two months of this secluded and studious life, Clémence Royer was as one new-born; she had shaken off the last shreds of her belief in Christianity, and had reached certain rational principles of philosophy, which she continued to affirm and develop during the rest of her life.

In 1859 she left the farm, and went to live in Lausanne to be near the library. In the following year she gave a course of logic and philosophy for women, in which she maintained the theory of evolution; this being the first course of rationalist philosophy ever

given in French Switzerland. About this period also she contributed a series of articles to the *Nouvel Economiste*, founded by Pascal Duprat, a refugee from France, to whom she became united. In the year 1860 the government of the Canton de Vaud, anxious to discover a rational and equitable system of taxation, involving the least possible friction, yet providing the revenue necessary for good government, invited economists to compete for a prize on this difficult subject. Clémence Royer entered for the competition, and the prize was awarded to her jointly with Proudhon. It seems a strange irony that Proudhon, who declared that women ought not to be considered responsible before they had attained the age of forty-five, that they were incapable of genius, and that there were only two rôles open to them, those of courtesan and house-keeper, should have had to divide a prize with a woman upon such a subject as "Taxation." Clémence Royer's treatise was published in 1862, and makes a massive volume of 750 closely-printed pages; for, although it was written in response to the special needs of the Canton de Vaud, the subject is treated in the widest possible manner. It is no mere dry treatise of figures, but is an exceedingly interesting review of the origin, general theory, and differing practice of taxation.

Hardly had this work left her hands than this young woman of thirty-two, bred in the narrowest Catholicism, proceeded to a task with which her name must be ever associated—viz., the translation, with Darwin's authority, of his recently-published *Origin of Species*. The translation appeared in Paris in 1862, just three years after the original publication, and it was through this translation that the French reading public first made acquaintance with Darwin. Mademoiselle Royer introduced the subject to her readers in a notable preface of some fifty-four pages, which she was inspired to write in response to the violent attacks made upon Darwin and his German translator by the clericals in England and Germany. The clergy everywhere, she said, pretend not to be the enemies of science; if one may believe them, they would even protect it, provided it would consent to stay docilely within the limits they lay down. They had, however, learned by experience that there is hardly a conquest of the human mind which has not encroached upon their domain; not a discovery which has not made a breach in their system. It had been contended on Darwin's behalf that his theory was not antagonistic to religion; but Clémence Royer's nature detested all ambiguities, compromises, or evasions, and she declared it to be

profoundly heretical; as heretical as the theories of Lyell, which abolished the universal deluge; as heretical as Newton's gravitation and the Copernican system, which denied the star's power to guide the Magi to the cradle of the Messiah, and would not allow Joshua capability to stay the movement of the sun. This preface, the whole of which well deserves translation, aroused a considerable storm among orthodox people, but decidedly enhanced the reputation she had already made by her book on taxation.

No sooner was her translation of Darwin's masterpiece launched than Clémence Royer began another work, and in 1864 she published in Brussels a philosophical romance entitled "The Twins of Hellas," which seems to have been prohibited in France. In the same year also she wrote an Italian essay upon "The Future of Turin." Six years later she published what was for long considered her ablest and most original work, "The Origin of Man and Society," in which she reaffirms the rational scientific theory of evolution and traces out the origin and development of life and thought upon earth, and the history of man as individual, and of human societies. This was followed by several other essays, displaying great research and originality of thought, such as "Funeral Rites in Prehistoric Times," "Hypothesis of Heredity," and "The Good and the Moral Law," besides many valuable contributions to the French General Encyclopædia, and to anthropological and economic reviews.

Always a student, and always eager "to combat the proselytism of the absurd by the proselytism of common sense," in 1900 this remarkable woman, having reached her seventieth year, brought out her last great work, the crown of her career, the result of five-and-twenty years' labor. This book—a thick volume of 800 pages—is entitled *La constitution du monde; Dynamique des atomes; Nouveaux principes de philosophie naturelle*. In the preface to this last work of hers she takes vehement exception to the use of the term "unknowable." Her vigorous mind loved bold affirmations; she had no sympathy with hesitating or half-hearted acceptances of great truths. She thirsted to understand all, to explain all; she refused to admit the "unknowable." The only unknowable to reason, she said, is that which does not exist. There is nothing incomprehensible but the contradictory, which is the impossible. The things which science will never know are the wild visions of the human imagination, which seeks to give reality to its ignorance; fantastic dreams of the night taken for the realities of the day; errors born of falsehood and exploited by credulity.

In her old age life was not kind to Clémence Royer. On the fall of the Empire, Pascal Duprat was able to return to France, when he was elected député, and Clémence ably seconded him in his political career. But Duprat died in 1885, and Clémence, by degrees, fell into ill health and complete poverty. Her last days were passed in the Asile Galignani, where she died on February 5, 1902.

To-day, as we recall the sanity and vigor of her intellect, the simplicity and clearness of the language she used to explain her ideas, the devotion and loyalty with which she consecrated herself to the search for truth, we feel that her name should be written in letters of gold on the imperishable roll of the servants of rationalism and humanity.

THEONOMY.

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DR. T. PROCTOR HALL'S "SCIENTIFIC THEOLOGY."

Believers in God find it more and more difficult with increasing scientific knowledge to retain the old theism, and so they either turn atheists or modify the old conception of God into one that is more or less scientifically tenable. On another page of this issue we have a remarkable example of this latter tendency in the article "Scientific Theology" presented in elegant brevity by Dr. T. Proctor Hall, a man whose knowledge in the natural sciences has rendered it difficult for him to accept the traditional God-conception of orthodox Christianity, and yet who is not shallow enough to be satisfied with a crude materialism or the current atheism of to-day, and truly his aspiration is justified. The traditional God-conception has stood for great realities in the endeavor of progressive mankind, for the ideals of social justice and the attainment of truth. The idea of God thus formed was certainly not in vain and must have served—yea is still serving—some good purpose in life.

The neatness with which Dr. Hall builds up his philosophy is admirable, his elucidations render his thought plausible and even acceptable to those who incline to his way of thinking, and yet his method is fallacious and some of his arguments lead him astray, so that we here propose to point out briefly the mistakes from which his presentation suffers. However, we will find that, after all, his ideal of preserving a God-conception can be maintained, although the God-conception which we consider as delineating the God of science would be somewhat different from his, but in many